

application as follows:

**IN THE ELECTION/RESTRICTION:**

Applicant hereby elects the invention identified as Group VIII (Figure 25), on which generic Claims 1-4 and Claim 26 read, for further prosecution, subject to a traverse of imposition of the restriction requirement, as set forth below under the "Remarks" heading.

**CONDITIONAL PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME**

If any extension of time for this response is required, applicant requests that this be considered a petition therefore. Please charge the required Petition fee to Deposit Account No. 03-1240.

**ADDITIONAL FEE**

Please charge any insufficiency of fees, or credit any excess to our Deposit Account No. 03-1240.

**REMARKS**

The Examiner has issued a Restriction Requirement, requiring that the applicant elect among several distinct species of the invention and identify claims that are directed at the elected species. Applicant hereby elects (with traverse) the invention identified as Group VIII (Figure 25), on which generic Claims 1-4 and Claim 26 read.

Applicant respectfully traverses the imposition of the restriction requirement by the Examiner and respectfully provides the following argument and a

suggestion of an alternate grouping of claims, based upon the type of the connecting element utilized in the claimed invention.

First, the applicant respectfully points out that the X (ten) groups of species identified by the Examiner should be supplemented as follows:

- a) embodiments shown in Figs. 18-21 should be added to Group VII;
- b) embodiments shown in Figs. 22-25 should be added to Group VIII;
- c) embodiments shown in Figs. 26-29 should be added to Group IX; and
- d) embodiments shown in Figures 30-33 should be added to Group X.

Second, the applicant would like to provide the following description of the X (ten) groups in order to clarify the relationship between the species:

- Group I, Figs. 1-3, is directed to embodiments comprising a compression spring 1.  
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- Group I, Figs. 8-11, is directed to embodiments comprising a leg spring 7.
- Group II is directed to embodiments comprising a tension spring 4.
- Group III is directed to an embodiment including a compression spring 1, a tension spring 4 or a leg spring 7 (i.e. an embodiment according to one of groups I and II), and comprises additionally a joint tube 5.
- Group IV is directed to an embodiment comprising a clamping sleeve 10 connecting two constructing elements with a circular cross-section which are inserted into the clamping sleeve in parallel.

- Groups V and VI are directed to embodiments in which a leg spring 7 is used in combination with clamping sleeve 10.
- Group VII is directed to an embodiment comprising a clamping sleeve 10 and two connected elements with oval cross-section which are inserted into the clamping sleeve in an orientation with their ends facing to each other.
- Group VIII is directed to an embodiment according to group VII, wherein the connected elements have a circular cross-section.
- Group IX is directed to an embodiment according to group IV, wherein the connected elements have a rectangular cross-section.
- Group X is directed to an embodiment according to group IV, wherein three instead of two connected elements are inserted in parallel.

Third, the applicant respectfully disagrees with Examiner's grouping of X (ten) identified types of species and suggests that they be group in accordance with the type of the connecting element that is utilized in the claimed invention. Accordingly, the applicant suggest the following three (3) sets of related species:

The first set of species consists of all embodiments covered by generic Claims 1-4, in which the connecting element is a spring (a compression spring 1, a leg spring 7 or a tension spring 4). This set of closely related species is identified as Groups I, II and III by the Examiner. Since all species in this set utilize a spring as a mechanical connecting element, they should be grouped/linked together.

The second set of species consists of all embodiments covered by generic Claims 1-4, in which the connecting element is a clamping sleeve. This set of closely related species is identified as Groups IV, VII, VIII, IX and X by the Examiner (and as further supplemented above). Since all species in this set utilize a clamping sleeve as a mechanical connecting element, they should be grouped/linked together.

Finally, the third set of species consist of embodiment in which both types of connecting elements, i.e. a spring and a clamping sleeve, are utilized. This group of closely related species is identified as Groups V and VI by the Examiner.

The applicant respectfully points out that Claims 1-4 are generic and cover all species described above. Furthermore, Claims 21-26 are directed at the elected set # 2 of the identified species. Accordingly Claims 1-4 and 21-26 are elected for further prosecution.

Entry of this election and an early favorable action on the merits are respectfully requested.

<b>CERTIFICATE OF MAILING</b>	
I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail under 37 C.F.R. 1.8 in an envelope addressed to:	
Assistant Commissioner for Patents, United States Patent and Trademark Office, Washington, D.C. 20231	
DATE:	<u>Apr. 30, 2002</u>
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Respectfully submitted,

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